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SPEECH

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J. L. M. CURRY, OF ALABAMA,

ON THE

BILL GRANTING PENSIONS TO THE SOLDIERS OF THE WAR OF 1812.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 27, 1858.

The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, Mr. CURRY said:

MR. CHAIRMAN: I approach the discussion of this subject with some reluctance, and am sensible of the difficulty and unpleasantness of the task. To deny a boon of this kind to those who are pathetically described as the "old soldiers," subjects one's conduct to misconstruction. It is very far from my purpose to derogate from the value of the services of those who fought the "second war of independence." My impulses and feelings prompt me to the exercise of the largest liberality in their behalf; but impulses and feelings are not safe guides for legislation, and must yield to convictions of duty, springing, not from gratitude, but from the Constitution, the rights of others, and the state of the treasury. "Pathetic duty," said Livingston, in discussing this very question, "was a heresy in politics as in morals."

It is the rule of all governments to grant pensions of some sort. In England the King has been regarded as the sole judge of the merit for which pensions are to be given. The power was conceded to him to furnish rewards for public service, to acknowledge or stimulate merit, and to raise those who had been serving their country above the caprices of fortune. It has been sadly abused to sustain a royal household, to feed a host of parasitic dependents, to tempt and corrupt the opposition, to buy up placemen, and secure political influence. The nation grew restive under these grants of royal favor. A severe and protracted struggle has been waged to require ministerial responsibility for the bestowment of this patronage, to reduce and limit the amount of pensions, and secure parliamentary interference. The struggle has been so far successful that all parliamentary interference has been an "interference of restraint."

Unlike England, in the United States the pension system, instead of being restrained, has been enlarged. As the screw, from every revolution, gathers additional power, so every enlargement of our pension list has but increased the demands and augmented the outside pressure. This bill is the most comprehensive of all; the most generous in its recognitions of merit; the most indiscriminate and princely in the bestowment of its charities.

To provide for the revolutionary soldiers, different acts of legislation have been passed by Congress. At an early period, during the war—as was stated by the gentleman from New York, (Mr. FENTON),—pensions, adequate to their

support during life, or the continuance of their disability, were rightly granted to those who lost a limb, or were otherwise disabled in the line of their duty. Subsequently these laws for the benefit of the wounded and disabled were enlarged and explained. In 1818, those "who served in the war of the Revolution until the end thereof, or for the term of nine months, or longer, at any period of the war *on the continental establishment*," and "by reason of reduced circumstances in life," were in need "of assistance from the country for support," were provided for. In 1828 pensions were given, without any qualification as to property, to all officers and soldiers who served in the continental line of the army to the close of the war. Finally, in 1832, the terms were enlarged, and pensions were granted to *all* who served, in a military capacity, during the war of the Revolution, for a period of not less than six months. First, those disabled in the military and naval service received pensions; then the indigent and necessitous; and lastly, all were embraced.

So fervent was the national gratitude, these pension laws, although opposed in part by some of the purest and best men of the Union, received the popular sanction. It ought not to be forgotten, however, that it was repeatedly denied in debate that these laws could be claimed as a precedent for pensioning soldiers of later wars. It was asserted that no such claim could ever arise; that there could, in the nature of things, be no similar service. It was a physical, and moral, and political impossibility. To this that sagacious statesman and incorruptible patriot, Nathaniel Macon, in 1818, replied, that "it did not require the gift of prophecy to foretell that thirty or forty years hence as much may be said in favor of the army engaged in the second war of independence, as we have now heard about the first: though as much may not be said about the state of the country and of the sufferings of the people, because the facts will not warrant it."

Sure enough, the prediction in forty years has been verified, and pensions for the soldiers of the war of 1812 are now claimed as a matter of right and justice. This bill goes even beyond the laws making provision for the soldiers of the Revolution. As before stated, the most comprehensive act granting pensions for revolutionary service was that of 1832. The rate of pension was graduated by the length of service and the grade or rank in which it was rendered. Two years' service entitled the party to the full pay of his rank in the line, not to exceed, however, the pay of a captain. For shorter periods the pension was proportionably less; but no pension was provided for merely being in a battle, or for any length of service less than six months. A private's pay in the Revolution was \$6 66 $\frac{2}{3}$ per month, or \$80 per annum. In the war of 1812 it was \$8 per month, or \$96 per annum; so that while the highest pension a private in the Revolution could receive for two years' service was \$80 per annum, for one year's service \$40 per annum, and for six months' service \$20 per annum, this bill gives \$96 per annum for only three months' service, or for even one day's service, provided the party was engaged in battle. There were many persons, during the war of 1812, suddenly called into service, as at New Orleans, North Point, Plattsburg, and Bladensburg, who were engaged in "active battle," and who were not in service but a few weeks; yet, under this bill, they will be entitled to full pensions, while the revolutionary soldier who may have served five months and twenty-nine days, and during that period been engaged in more than one active battle, would receive nothing. The man who served only three months in the war of 1812 will receive, under this bill, \$16 per annum more than the revolutionary soldier who served two years; and yet how vast the difference between the two struggles!

This bill throws all other pension bills in the shade, and out-Herods Herod in the magnificence of its liberality. In very wantonness of generosity and gratitude, it throws aside restrictions, magnifies, as I have shown, the services of the soldiers of 1812 above those of the "times that tried men's souls," and en-
 rising above all such petty considerations as length of service, privations endured, disabilities incurred, it embraces in its scope all who served for a term of three months, or were engaged in a battle; all, without distinction, the indigent, confined to his couch or hobbling on crutch, and the stout and stalwart; the rich, living in wealth and luxury, and the indigent, straitened by poverty

and a numerous family; those who served five years and those who served three months. I am mistaken. The proposed amendment of my friend from Georgia, (Mr. GARTRELL,) reminds me there is a distinction. The general and colonels, and major and captain, get their forty dollars per month; the lieutenants their thirty dollars; the ensigns, their twenty dollars; the surgeons, their sixty dollars; the sergeants, their eleven dollars, while the private, who shouldered his musket, bore his knapsack, performed the drudgery, fought the battles, has his eight dollars per month. It matters not if the common soldier has twelve children, and the officer only one child; the private has penury and want, and the officer plenty and ease, still this inexorable bill makes the distinction. The Duke of Cambridge, recently, with noble candor, declared that English prowess and achievements in the Crimean war were due to the common soldier. Without disparaging the gallantry and courage of our noble officers, I can truthfully affirm, and the experience of the distinguished gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. QUITMAN) will confirm the assertion, that we owe much of our military glory and *prestige* to the rank and file; and there is no just reason, when the Government is dispensing its gratuities, and bestowing its charities, for discriminating offensively and injuriously against the common soldier. It is a fallacy, that the officers encounter more dangers, or possess more patriotism than the privates, or are more concerned for their country's success in time of war.

The Scriptures commend the wisdom of the man, who, intending to build a tower, sitteth down first and counteth the cost to see whether he hath sufficient to finish it. So it is well enough for us, in advance, to count the cost of this bill, and ascertain the probable annual expenditures under its operation. The estimate, I admit, must be somewhat conjectural; but the data are sufficient to give proximate certainty. I have before me a table, carefully prepared at the Pension Office, making an estimate of the amount involved in this bill. The estimates are based upon a comparison of the force engaged, with the bounty and land granted under late laws for such service. The number of survivors entitled to claim the benefits of the proposed pension, and the amount necessary to be appropriated, are ascertained by finding the whole amount of force employed in the war of 1812, the pensions necessary for all, and then taking three-eighths of those sums. After this liberal deduction, and including the marine and navy corps engaged in 1812, the amount, involved in granting pensions under this bill, is \$11,321,730 per annum. One of the strongest objections in 1818 to the bill, then under consideration, providing for the surviving officers and soldiers of the Revolution, as conceded by its advocates, was the supposed exorbitancy of the sum required, amounting to \$120,000 per annum. By this bill, in characteristic conformity with modern progressiveness, without any qualms of conscience, \$11,000,000—as much as the whole expenditures of this Government in 1825—are to be given away every year.

This exorbitant amount, I am aware, is hooted at, and considerations of economy are stifled by railing at improper expenditures in other respects, as if one wrong justified another, and by appeals for the soldiers, whose services are assimilated and made superior to the services of the revolutionary soldiers. Now, there is no legal obligation resting upon us to confer these pensions. There was no such stipulation in the contract between the Government and those who served it. They become, then, mere gratuities. If claimed as a matter of right, the next step will be to adopt the policy of Great Britain, which has her magnificent Chelsea hospital for the relief and support of worn-out and disabled soldiers, and her Greenwich hospital, once a royal palace, as an asylum for seamen who, by age, wounds, or other accidents, become unfit for service. If the principle of this bill be right and defensible, then it is perfectly competent for Congress to construct hospitals and asylums and homes for those who have been soldiers and sailors, to feed and clothe and shelter them and their wives, and educate their children.

As practical legislators, it behooves us to ascertain whether the Treasury can support this large additional expenditure; and, if it cannot, to provide the necessary means. Let us examine our present financial condition, as exhibited in the report of that most faithful and able public officer, the Secretary of the Treasury:

The Secretary of the Treasury estimates the aggregate means for the current fiscal year at.....	\$75,889,934 00
Expenditures for same period.....	74 968,058 41
Leaving an estimated balance of.....	\$426,875 59
or less than half a million dollars in the Treasury on 1st of July, 1858.	
Now, to operate this Government, a surplus is <i>at all times</i> needed of.....	\$5,000,000 00
Appropriations for Sound dues, printing, and Army deficiencies, &c., will amount to.....	12,000,000 00
Private claims to be paid.....	1,000,000 00
Increase of army.....	2,000,000 00
Public expenditures, not estimated for, such as court, custom, and light-houses..	5,000,000 00
Falling off of customs below estimates.....	10,000,000 00
Making an aggregate of.....	\$35,000,000 00
To meet this, Treasury notes have been authorized to the amount of.....	20,000,000 00
Leaving unprovided for.....	\$15,000,000 00

These are all moderate estimates, and they do not include the expenses of the Oregon war, amounting to four or five millions; the French spoiliations, covering not less than five millions; the Pacific railroad, variously estimated from ten to one hundred millions; and yet this pension bill will add eleven millions more, making an actual *bona fide* debt of twenty, or twenty-five millions (besides the public debt of \$25,000,000) for the payment of which no provision is made. No one, surely, contemplates the creation of this additional debt without preparing to meet it. How is it to be done? By loan or by increase of tariff. With ordinary prosperity, the present duties will be barely sufficient to defray the current expenditures. They will not bear an increase of several millions. The taxes, then, must be increased, if loans are not resorted to. On what articles? Will you abolish the free list, tea, coffee, &c., and put your increased tax on them, and sugar, iron, salt, coarse cotton, and woolen goods, the prime necessities of life, or on luxuries? It is proposed to throw these additional burdens on the Government, and common legislative prudence and sagacity demand that ample and speedy provision should be made to meet them. Burdens are to be imposed, taxes are to be increased, retrenchment and economy made impossible, and the country should know it, and means should at once be placed in the hands of the Government to carry out your legislation. I insist that gentlemen who are pressing so vigorously the passage of this bill should accept the consequences of their legislation, and take the responsibility of increasing the taxes or negotiating a loan. If you give this gratuity, the laboring classes should be advised that they have to pay it. To such demands as this and many others, in the present financial condition of the Government, as Edmund Burke said in 1780, it should be now answered with firmness, "the public is poor."

This is a gloomy picture. Unfortunately it is a truthful one. Two causes may conspire to place the Government in a better condition. First, a rapid reaction in trade and commerce by increased general prosperity—swelling the importations and increasing the revenues. Secondly, by retrenchment—lopping off expenditures and resisting the pressure for large appropriations. Our legislation, thus far, has not furnished much assurance of a disposition to economize. Our Government has become disgracefully extravagant, and for it all parties are responsible. Under the watchwords, "retrenchment and reform," the friends of General Jackson carried on the political contest, in 1828, against the administration of the younger Adams. Under the same attractive rallying-cry, the Whig party defeated Van Buren, and elected General Harrison in 1840. In 1841 Mr. Calhoun, the wisest and most sagacious statesman that this country, so prolific of great men, has produced, said, that \$17,000,000 were sufficient to defray the expenses of this Government, economically administered. Since then new territory has been acquired, our frontier has been extended, hostile and expensive tribes of Indians have been brought within our jurisdiction, and our expenses have necessarily increased, but out of all reason they have run up to nearly eighty millions dollars. To test whether these large expenditures are proper, and whether the revenue has been judiciously and economically applied, I propose to institute a comparison between 1840 and 1857; and to

those who have not noted carefully our extravagance, the results will be astounding.

The disbursements of the Government for many years have been comprised under four general heads: the civil list, including foreign intercourse and miscellaneous, the military service, the naval establishment, and the public debt. The expenditures under the civil list, excluding foreign intercourse and miscellaneous, have increased from \$2,736,769 31 in 1840, to \$7,207,112 42 in 1857, showing an increase of one hundred and seventy-five per cent. since 1840. The total expenditures, exclusive of the public debt, have run up from \$24,139,920 11 in 1840, to \$65,032,559 76 in 1857, showing an increase of about one hundred and seventy per cent., while the increase of the population during the same time has been only sixty-seven per cent. The contingent expenses of the two Houses of Congress were, in 1840, \$384,333 17, and in 1857, \$1,364,578 53. For printing and stationery for the two Houses were paid, in 1840, \$115,904 77, and in 1857, \$732,687 42. The cost of collecting the revenue, which is not embraced in the general expenditures, was, in 1840, \$1,513,138 23, and in 1857, \$3,161,935 86. The army expenses were, in 1840, \$6,608,770 92, and in 1857, \$15,434,424 50. The aggregate strength of the army in 1840 was ten thousand five hundred and seventy, and in July last, according to the report of the Secretary of War, fifteen thousand seven hundred and sixty-four. The average cost of each individual, in 1840, was \$625 93, and in 1857, \$979 09, making the present cost of each individual in the army to exceed that of 1840 by \$353 16. The total expenses of the navy, in 1840, were \$6,110,214 11, and in 1857, \$11,281,038 29. The whole number in marine corps and navy, in 1840, were ten thousand and eighty-one, and in 1857, eleven thousand one hundred and forty-six. Leaving out the marine corps, the cost of each individual in the navy, in 1840, was \$643 70, and in 1857, \$1,112 90. The appropriations for public buildings, custom and court houses, post offices, &c., in 1840, were \$662,168, and in 1857, \$4,561,855 41. It is but proper to state that the revenue received at many of the points where these outlays have been made will not, in a dozen years, defray the cost of construction. These facts show that economy in the disbursement of the public money exists only in name, and admonish us against opening any other sources of expenditure.

It is an axiom that economy is the life-blood of Republics, and that it is robbery to take more money from the people than is barely sufficient for a wise and economical administration of public affairs. It ought to be engraven in letters of light on the walls of this Capitol, that Government has no more money than it obtains from the pockets of the people, and that it is a curse to have an overflowing treasury. We are dazzled with the idea of a rich and magnificent government, lavishly distributing its millions and attracting by its splendor the gaze of the world; but it is an *ignis fatuus*, luring but to destroy. We want a poor government, and the people want light taxes and small expenditures. To quote from Mr. Calhoun:

"The purity and duration of our free institutions, looking to the vast extent of the country and its great and growing population, depend on restricting its revenues and expenditures, and thereby its patronage and influence, to the smallest amount consistent with the proper discharge of the few great duties for which it was instituted."

Having established the inequalities of the bill, the utter incapacity of the Government, with its present resources, to sustain this additional burden of eleven million dollars annually, and the necessity for more rigid economy instead of greater extravagance, I propose to advance a step further and suggest some general considerations in reference to this subject. The report accompanying the bill urges its passage, "as an act to be done now to *affect the future*, constituting a *military policy*;" and speaks of a liberal pension system as "almost a necessary consequence, while our military policy continues the same that it has been since the foundation of the Government." The gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. SAVAGE) who has special charge of the measure, in his able speech, enforced and elaborated the same view. No such stimulus is needed as is suggested in the report, and was argued by the gentleman from Tennessee, "to secure the love and confidence of our people," or to arouse "their ardor and patriotism to meet dangers yet to be encountered." It is a reproach

to the valor and patriotism of our people to intimate that such sordid considerations control them in rallying to their country's standard in times of trial. The history of the country is luminous of the reverse. Every war in which we have been engaged bears honorable testimony of the contrary. When the "shrill trump and spirit-stirring drum and ear-piercing fife" are heard in the land, from mountain and vale, from town and country, the citizen soldiery flock, not to the "royal banner," but to the stars and stripes, as the "waves come when navies are stranded."

I may assume, however, from what we have heard, that the object and purpose of the advocates of this measure are to fasten the pension system upon the country, to give it permanence, to incorporate it into our political and military organism, and establish a precedent which may be conclusively pleaded in favor of the allowance of these bounties to all soldiers engaged in all subsequent wars. Whether so intended or not, a favorable decision on this bill—

"will be recorded for a precedent,
And many an error by the same example
Will rush into the State."

As our regular army is constantly engaged in skirmishes with hostile and predatory Indians, you cannot stop short of all who are in the service. Pensions to the revolutionary soldiers cannot be justly used as a plea for this enlargement of the system. The Revolution had a special pre-eminence, lifting it above all other wars; and it is idle to assimilate to it the war of 1812 and cotemporaneous Indian wars. Half starved, half clad, tracking their course with blood, the hardships endured, the sacrifices made, the toils and privations undergone by the heroes of 1776, find no parallel in later wars. It is not necessary to institute a comparison as to the courage and gallantry of the men in the two wars, or the value of their services. Suffice it to say that, in our revolutionary struggle, the Americans were regarded as rebels and traitors, and not unfrequently treated as such. The Government was unstable, precarious, and often inactive. "In journeyings often, in perils by their own countrymen, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness," the revolutionary soldiers fought against the mother country, and received their scant pittance in a depreciated currency. Very different was the war of 1812. It was a regular war between two independent nations, conducted, for the most part, according to the recognized rules of modern warfare. The soldier, when discharged from service, or before, received his pay in good money, and one hundred and sixty acres of land besides. The soldiers of the war of 1812 were gallant men; deserve well of their country; but wherein do they exceed in personal courage, value of services, or hazards of war, those engaged in the Seminole war in 1817; the Black Hawk war in 1832; the Florida war from 1835 to 1842; the Creek disturbances in 1836, or the Mexican war in 1846? There can be no distinction in principle between them. There is no talismanic superiority in service against British troops or the Indians during the war of 1812, over Mexican troops or the Indians, at a later period than 1815. If one be entitled, so are the others; and the passage of this bill inaugurates a policy which cannot be arrested. Vote this gratuity, distribute these bounties, and you array and ramify influences which, possessed of the precedent and acting on the defensive, will defy and defeat all efforts to arrest, or return to economy. The first man who proposed, in Rome, a gratuitous distribution of corn from the public granaries was condemned to suffer the punishment of treason. After a while the pensioners became so numerous that the most absolute and despotic emperors feared to interfere with their bounties. When Augustus came to power, he found three hundred and twenty thousand citizens of the male sex (for females were excluded) enrolled as recipients of the public dole; and, while he confessed that these *largesses* were working unmitigated evil, he avowed, in later years, that, if he withdrew the gratuitous distributions, a successful rival would displace him, and restore them.

This question is argued as if the Government had unlimited power, and could sequester, at will, the property of its citizens. I do not belong to that school of politicians who invest Congress with the omnipotence of the British Parliament,

and from the power "to lay and collect taxes," "to raise and support armies," "to provide and maintain a navy," claim sovereignty over property, and the uncontrolled right to appropriate it, as caprice, or partiality, or hate, or benevolence may dictate. There is no sovereignty in Congress; and when we tax the people beyond what is necessary for an economical administration of the government, to bestow bounties, gratuities, and pensions, we rob Peter to pay Paul; we oppress a majority to support a few favorites; we transfer the property of nine men to the tenth man. It was never intended to invest our Government with an absolute power over the property of the citizens. Our revolutionary struggle was a successful protest against the English notion of sovereignty over private property. Representation is a farce; popular elections are an abortion; constitutions are ropes of sand; our Revolution was a failure, if there is sovereign power over property in this Government. Clear grants of power, specific enumerations of objects of appropriation, reservations of undelegated power, were unnecessary if Congress can indulge a "sovereign, legislative patronage in favor of local, private, or individual interests." English kings have claimed the right to dispose of public and private property to favorites, to purchase adherents; but I have sought in vain for any word of the Constitution authorizing us to make donations, or bestow benevolence with the money of the people.

Great Britain has struggled for years to relieve herself of the excesses of her pension system, to make ministers responsible for the bestowment of her gratuities; and we, with the benefit of her experience, are gravely proposing to take up and adopt her exploded and condemned theories. Her experience ought to be an admonition to us; but, in the face of it, and without a clear ground of constitutional authority, we are copying a bad example.

The history of pensions, in other lands, is a history of frauds and abuses. Here we have men, rioting in luxury, begging to be quartered on the Government, and a greedy troop of cormorant speculators and claim agents, harpy-like,

"Contactu omnia fedans immundo,"

getting up instructions from Legislatures, and inciting a clamor for the "poor soldiers," many of whom would be fleeced of a large portion of what you propose so munificently to donate. In other countries, the system is reprobated; in this, its consequences will be most pernicious.

A class of consumers will be created, interested in sustaining a government that supports them, who will advocate large expenditures, and may infuse poisonous opinions in the public mind. Crowned heads, by pensions, attach families to the throne, secure political influence, and enlarge their power. Congress, by its *douceurs* and gratuities, may extend the power and patronage of this Government, already alarmingly great, and raise up a class of "feeders upon legislative patronage," who are interested in giving a blind support to all its measures, and uninquiringly acquiescing in whatever may be done. I repeat, as there is no sovereignty in this Government—least of all, a sovereign power to take away the property of the citizens—and as Congress is but an agent or trustee, it cannot exercise powers not delegated, nor give bounties and do benevolence at the expense of those who created the Government.

Suppose we concede, for argument's sake, that the power to grant pensions and make gratuities and give away the public money, as caprice or kindness prompts, was conferred in the Constitution: I should then hold that the system was unwise and inexpedient. It is bad policy to accustom men to look to Government for support. It is unwise to quarter soldiers or sailors, able-bodied and healthy, on the public treasury. It is destructive of manly independence to rely on extrinsic means for subsistence. This whole matter grows out of a wrong conception of the duty and design of a free government. Instead of having men as stipendiaries, instead of making government an almoner of bounty, and converting it into a huge eleemosynary concern to dispense charity; instead of making it a sort of second-hand Providence, predestinating, regulating, and controlling the destiny and pursuits and industry of individuals, its duties are few, simple, and well defined. In France, government may be expected to furnish employment for the working men; and, failing to do that, to supply them with bread and wages. But in France, the republic has lapsed

into a crushing military despotism. In Rome, the people may have been fed from public granaries; but it is recorded of her, that the days of her republic were numbered when the people consented to receive corn from the Government cribs. In a free country, the citizen should, to a very great extent, under wise and just laws, be thrown on his own resources, and not slavishly rely upon the government to give him bread and clothes, build his roads and houses, regulate his appetites, take care of his morals, and educate his children. Such a system centralizes the government, enervates, paralyzes, and withdraws stimulus to personal effort and activity, reduces to dependence, destroys responsibility, debases, and demoralizes. All such legislation by Congress, whether in the form of protective tariffs, fishing bounties, assumption of State debts, building roads, giving land to colleges, or furnishing homes under sweeping and unconstitutional homestead laws, is at war with the true theory of a republic, destructive of its integrity, and dangerous to popular liberty.

The wise and patriotic statesman at the head of this Government, in his inaugural and annual message, strongly recommended us to scrutinize expenditures with the utmost vigilance, and to practice rigid economy. With an overflowing treasury, this would have been difficult to do. With a depleted treasury, nothing is easier. The Democratic party, responsible in a very great degree for the administration of public affairs, liberal in its promises to retrench and reform, owes it to its own self-respect, and, in view of the effort to reconstruct a new party, to its future success, to commence a rigid system of economy and retrenchment; to lop off all expenses not necessary for the defence of the country and the frugal administration of the government; and to put an end, so far as it can, to waste, extravagance, and fraud.

I am aware that it has been said that there is a natural tendency to extravagance in republics; that a resort to direct taxation is the only cure for this chronic malady; and I believe, with Sir Robert Peel, that "all indirect taxation has a natural tendency to produce injustice;" yet, with proper efforts, with a cordial coöperation between the executive and legislative departments, this Government can be brought back to republican simplicity and economy. An earnest of our purpose will be given, and a great advance will be made in defeating this and similar bills, and rebuking this disposition to look to Government for the dispensation of its favors.

I do not desire, Mr. Chairman, to be understood as questioning, in the slightest degree, the laws providing for those who have been disabled in the service of their country. I think them eminently wise and proper. I have greatly failed, also, of my purpose, if anything that I have said can be construed in a disparagement of those brave and true men who, at their country's call, left home and kindred, and periled everything in her behalf. For their self-sacrificing patriotism, their heroic daring, their gallantry, and courage, I would render all proper honor and reward. Many of them are my neighbors; scores of them I represent on this floor. The country of my residence bears the name of, and its shire town is located on, one of the memorable battle-fields of the bloody Indian war. I can have no motive for doing injustice to or underrating the services of our country's defenders. Sinister considerations might prompt me to the advocacy and support of this bill; but those who have encountered hardships and shed their blood for their country's honor, would scorn a gratuity tainted with injustice, and obtained by overriding the Constitution and bankrupting the treasury.

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